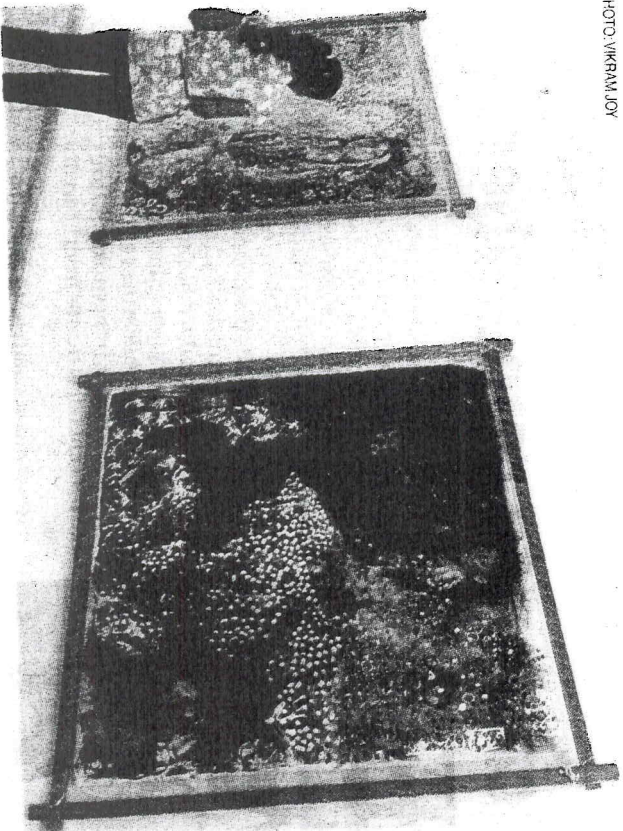


WOVEN PORTRAITS

Paints and threads merge in Marion Colomer's portraits

PHOTO: VIKRAM JOT



NAVDEEP SANDHU

LOOKING at her work one wonders whether Marion Colomer is an artist or a fashion designer. But probably she is a mix of both, for only then would her palette hold threads, sequins, glass et al. Nine portraits on a 6X6 canvas form her collection 'Portraits 2007'. From Maharajas to Glitteratis' organised by The French Embassy in India and Alliance Francaise de Chandigarh in collaboration with Chandigarh Lalit Kala Akademi. From painting royalty she has now turned to the present elite class, becoming the "official painter" of power.

In an attempt to create mystery about the subjects, the Marion hides portraits behind embroidery and intricate patterns in colour. Fusing the elements of French haute couture and Indian motifs Marion bridges the gap between the two cultures. The embroidery for her paintings is created by Indian craftsmen. The 25-year-old says that she wants to go on working with these craftsmen since the art of embroidery has survived here unlike France. So not only does texture come alive on the canvas, but also the personalities of her subjects. Marion uses birds, ani-

mals and flowers in the portraits to give the onlookers an insight into these lives. In a subtle portrait Nawab Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi finds himself in the company of colourful birds. His white shervani is embroidered in beautiful patterns. Princess Shekhar Jah's lively personality comes alive in dark and vibrant colours, peacocks in the background. Princess Esra Jah sits calm and composed among sequins, beads and threads. Butterflies don Julius Macman's frame. Intricate patterns form the highlights of the portraits of Meera Muzaffar Ali, Alyque Padamsee and Gaurav Gupta whose dreamy eyes are well-captured. The most 'glamorous' of all is the one with Kiran Kher in her famous smile, Marion doesn't miss her long tresses either. Beads, glass, sequins form rich patterns all over the peach coloured canvas. With Jesus and rose patches Baba Anand is the most colourful of the lot and Marion unusually tells us a lot about the painter. She puts him on a cross like Christ with threads forming an aura around his head and the thorn crown. Go see it if you are looking for something different.

On at Alliance Francaise, Art Gallery, Sector 36-A till October 3